

HEADQUARTERS
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Civil Air Patrol Locates Missing Aircraft

(Corona, CA) – December 29, 2003 – After an exhaustive seven day search by the Civil Air Patrol (CAP), a missing aircraft with two persons aboard was located near the Corona Airport December 29. There were no survivors.

The single engine Cessna 150 departed Corona Airport the morning of Monday December 15 and failed to arrive at its destination - Torrance Airport. However, the pilot was not reported missing until a week later on Monday December 22.

That evening, the California Wing was assigned the mission by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC) at Langley Air Force Base in Virginia.

The search began with ground teams at 5:30 the next morning (Tuesday December 23). Over the next seven days, 206 personnel flying 64 sorties in 28 aircraft over 127 flying hours and 21 ground team missions were deployed in search of the missing aircraft. The search continued through Christmas before culminating today. Personnel from Sacramento to San Diego participated in the search. Over 2,000 man hours were expended on the mission.

Major Joseph Spahr, Incident Commander, said the aircraft was located at about 1:30 PM approximately 1,000 yards from the Corona Airport in very heavy brush. Major Ed Strucke, from Squadron 35, pilot, and scanner 1st Lieutenant Keith Stason from Squadron 10, saw an area of broken tree branches, however no aircraft was visible. Major Strucke directed a Riverside County Sheriff's helicopter to the scene. Riverside Sheriff's Deputies were lowered from the helicopter and confirmed the crash.

Names of the two on board were withheld pending positive identification by the coroner and notification of next of kin.

Making the search difficult was the delay in reporting the aircraft missing and no ELT (emergency locator transmitter beacon) was heard. The pilot had not filed a flight plan for the local flight.

The cause of the crash will be determined by the National Transportation Safety Board.